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CHINESE COMMUNIST GROUND THREAT AGAINST INDIA FROM TIBET AND SINKIANG

USIB MEMORANDUM

Submitted by the
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

Concurred in by the
UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

As indicated overleaf

17 April 1963 Memorandum, as revised 28 May 1963

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The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Defense, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and NSA.

Concurred in by the

UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

on 28 May 1963. Concurring were the Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State; The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency; the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; the Assistant Chief of Naval Operations (Intelligence), Department of the Navy; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF; the Director for Intelligence, Joint Staff; and the Director of the National Security Agency. The Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the USIB and the Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.

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C E N T R A L I N T E L L I G E N C E A G E N C Y

28 May 1963

SUBJECT: CHINESE COMMUNIST GROUND THREAT AGAINST INDIA FROM TIBET
AND SINKIANG

THE PROBLEM

The object of this study is to examine the offensive capabilities during 1963 of Communist China's ground forces against India and the Himalayan border states. This study does not consider attacks that might be launched by Chinese forces through Burma. It does not estimate Chinese Communist intentions.

CONCLUSIONS

A. Chinese Communist forces presently in the Sino-Indian border area consist of 4 divisions, 11 separate combat regiments, 5 border defense regiments, and administrative and support troops totaling about 120,000 men. A major offensive effort against India, as specified in E, would require the redeployment of additional divisions from elsewhere, which the Chinese could do without seriously jeopardizing their overall military posture. (Para. 2)

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B. Supplies for Chinese Communist military forces in southwest Sinkiang and Tibet are transported by road from rail-served base depots at Chengtu in Szechwan; Lanchow, and Hsiatung in Kansu; and in the vicinity of Urumchi in Sinkiang. From these railheads supplies are moved into the frontier area by motor transport over long and difficult routes, ranging from 500 to 1,800 miles, thus limiting the quantities of supplies which can be delivered. (Paras. 3-4)

C. We estimate that the Chinese could deliver an average of 1,600 tons per day to Tibet and southwest Sinkiang; this operation would require about 40,000 trucks. This rate of delivery, assuming the establishment of substantial reserves in the forward areas, would be sufficient on a continuing basis to satisfy the daily resupply requirements of about 225,000 combat and service troops. Of these a maximum of approximately 175,000 could be supported logistically in simultaneous attacks. The tonnage of 1,600 tons per day also could support air operations consuming approximately 450 tons daily. This maximum support effort would tax China's motor transport capabilities and would result in a heavy drain on POL supplies. (Paras. 5-6)

D. We believe that the maximum threat to India and the Himalayan border states would be limited to simultaneous attacks in Ladakh, through the border passes between Ladakh and Nepal, into Nepal, either into northern Assam across Bhutan or into the Siliguri area across

Sikkim, and into the Northeast Frontier Agency (NEFA). We believe the maximum Chinese force could be as large as 175,000 men, consisting of 7 light infantry divisions, 2 standard infantry divisions, and 15 independent infantry regiments.

E. We estimate that the Chinese, should they launch the attacks described above, would have the following military objectives:

a. In Ladakh, to extend Chinese control to include the capture of the important center of Leh.

b. In the border area between Ladakh and Nepal, to seize the Chinese territorial claim north of Joshimath.

c. In Nepal, to seize the major valley approaches and the city of Katmandu.

d. In the east, to occupy NEFA and to interdict Indian communications and control of Assam. (Paras. 14-32)

F. The next favorable periods for offensive operations begin in May for the avenues of approach on the frontier west of Katmandu and in September for the avenues east of Katmandu. (Paras. 7-9)

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